

WILLIAM THOMAS STEAD AND HIS 1901 VISION OF THE AMERICANIZED WORLD

*It is none the worse for that;
most of the things we now possess
began by being dreams.*

Russel Lowell

William Thomas Stead was one of the most controversial, eccentric and charismatic figures of the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Commonly known as a controversial journalist and the author of many spiritualist publications and lectures, as well as a practitioner of spiritualistic techniques, Stead was an influential intellectual and visionary of his times. In his most valuable book, published in 1901, *The Americanization of the World: or the Trend of the 20th Century*, Stead analyses the place and role of the United States in his times, and forms predictions about the domination of the 20th century by Americans. This paper presents the figure of W.T. Stead and his vision of the "American Century."

The beginnings and ends of some important periods have encouraged humanity not only to make certain summaries of the past, but also, perhaps principally, to make forecasts for the future. The forecasts are often of a prophetic nature, most frequently apocalyptic, which is certainly an expression of people's fears and uncertainties concerning the coming times. But our ancestors sometimes also looked to the future with optimism and hope.

One of these prophetic visions of the coming times is *The Americanization of the World: or the Trend of the Twentieth Century*, written by William Thomas Stead and published in 1901 both in England and the USA. On the one hand, Stead's book clearly fits into the trend of social considerations characteristic of times of breakthroughs, times full of fears and hopes, provoking people to make forecasts and prophecies of various nature, which were often irrational. On the other hand, it is an unusual book for two reasons. First, the author very precisely analyses the tendencies that may dominate the development of the world in the 20th century, using not only his social or historical knowledge, but also opinions of other contemporary scientists. He analyses literary texts and journalism, and sometimes even attempts linguistic and musicological analyses, revealing significant erudition. Another reason that makes Stead's book unusual is the accuracy of his diagnoses. When we look today at the 20th century from a historical

perspective, we may see how many prognoses by William Thomas Stead came true. It is surprising that although in the time of Stead his writings were very popular, and he himself was one of the most recognisable people, later generations remembered Stead principally as a controversial and scandalous journalist, and, most of all, as an eccentric involved in the spiritualist movement who openly admitted to having contact with the world beyond. It is only recent years that have brought about a more serious interest in Stead's writings. It is a fact that the author of *The Americanization of the World* was not a banal and unambiguous person, and perhaps it was due to his extravagant behaviour that he cast a shadow on the value of his writings.

William Thomas Stead was one of the most popular, eccentric and controversial figures of his times. Involved in many projects that were political, social, journalistic and literary, he was full of ideas, with his mind open to critical observations of the world on the micro and macro scale.

He was born in 1849 in the Northumberland village of Embleton as the son of a Congregational minister. At the age of 21 he became the editor of the *Northern Echo* in Darlington – he was the youngest newspaper editor in the country at that time. In 1880 he went to London and started working as a deputy editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. When John Morley, the editor-in-chief of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, who was also a Member of Parliament, became Secretary of State for Ireland, Stead succeeded him as editor and over the next several years created a new form of journalism.

Stead was a journalist who was much ahead of his time, first due to genre variations of his journalistic texts,¹ and second, due to the fact that he was aware of the social impact of texts published in the press. In Stead's time, the press was the only mass medium with extreme influence and opinion-making power, therefore Stead's journalism aimed not only to describe the world, but also to change it. Investigative journalism, journalistic provocation, and *created news* were soon to dominate journalistic practices. Stead was their pioneer, and used them to change the face of the world. These new forms and methods of journalistic work raised many emotions and controversies. They were christened by Mathew Arnold as *new journalism*.² And this is how this eminent British poet and cultural critic wrote about it: "It has much to recommend it; it is full of ability, novelty, variety, sensation, sympathy, generous instincts; its one great fault is that it is feather-brained. It throws out assertions at a venture because it wishes them true; does not correct either them or itself, if they are false; and to get at the state of things as they truly are seems to feel no concern whatever."³ Stead found *new journalism* very energetic, provocative, sensational and very effective. When in 1883 Stead directed his attention to London slum housing, his series of articles resulted in new housing legislation being introduced. When a year later he conducted his *The*

¹ He introduced the interview as a form of journalistic text when he interviewed General Charles Gordon. *Chinese Gordon on the Sudan*. *The Pall Mall Gazette*, January 9, 1884, available at: <http://www.attackingthedevel.co.uk/pmg/interview.php>. Accessed 24.07.2009.

² Mathew Arnold. 1887. Up to Easter. *The Nineteenth Century*, no. CXXIII, May, 629–643, available at: <http://www.attackingthedevel.co.uk/related/easter.php>. Accessed 24.07.2009.

³ Ibidem.

Truth about the Navy campaign, a campaign that in fact was based on Stead's imagination and invention, it resulted in 3.5 million pounds in government relief to refit and modernize Britain's old fleet.

In the summer of 1885 Stead shocked the world with one of the most sensational stories of Victorian times, starting a crusade against child prostitution with a series of articles titled *The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon*.⁴ It was well-known at that time that young English girls were purchased for a few pounds and employed as child prostitutes in London or very often exported to continental Europe. Stead cooperated with the Salvation Army, and with the help of its activists he described the procedure in his paper. He was attacked and condemned for his divulgations. The British government was well-acquainted with the problem of child prostitution but refused to recognize it, in order to protect the trade's rich clients.

Stead decided to use provocation with the purpose of proving that in England children are for sale. He organized the purchase of a 13-year-old girl called Eliza Armstrong, and then went through the whole procedure of preparing her for sale: she was examined to determine that she was still a virgin, then she was taken to brothel where she was drugged and made ready for her purchaser. After the text was published, the public was hysterical and the government was forced to increase the age of consent from 13 to 16, which was the first step taken to protect children from sexual exploitation. Stead, however, was prosecuted for transgression of the law he had exposed. It was proven that he had bought Eliza Armstrong only from her mother and had not obtained the permission of the child's father. If he had had the agreement of both parents his transaction would have been legal. As a result, Stead was sent to jail where he spent three months. As a matter of fact, the whole incident made Stead very proud of himself, and to honour it he wore his prison uniform on every anniversary of his conviction.

There was much controversy about the reasons behind Stead's actions. What motivated him – a strong desire to improve society or awareness that his sensational topics would sell newspapers? Many of his critics claimed that all he really cared about was increasing the circulation of his paper. George Bernard Shaw criticized the style of Stead's journalistic campaigns and accused him of tasteless sensationalism.⁵

After the Eliza Armstrong case and Stead's imprisonment, his reputation was never restored. Around 1890 Stead tired of daily journalism left *The Pall Mall Gazette*, and founded the international journal *The Review of Reviews*, first in England, and in the following years in the USA and Australia. Around the same time he began his fascination with spiritualism, which exposed him to the ridicule of his colleagues. In 1893 he founded and edited the spiritualist quarterly *Borderland*, which revealed Stead's deep interest in psychical research.

Pacifism was the next movement Stead became involved in. In 1889 he visited the Tsar of Russia, and this visit inspired him to found *The War against War*, a weekly paper devoted to the idea of peace. He attended peace conferences in Hague in 1899 and 1907, and he strongly opposed the war in Transvaal. He published *War against War*

⁴ The series consisting of four articles was published in *Pall Mall Gazette* between 6th and 10th July 1885.

⁵ Victor Pierce Jones. 1998. *Saint or Sensationalist? The Story of WT Stead, 1849–1912*. Chichester: Gooday, 35.

in South Africa, the weekly organ of the Stop the War Committee. Richard Gamble, in his paper devoted William T. Stead, claims: "Stead was a peace advocate, but certainly not a pacifist. He operated in the prophetic mode, and held on simultaneously to both ends of paradoxes; he waged militant holy war but did so for the sake of permanent, universal peace and an end to evil."⁶

When Stead boarded the Titanic, he was traveling to America to take part in a peace congress in Carnegie Hall on April 21st. After the ship struck the iceberg, Stead helped several women and children into the lifeboats. The last time he was seen in the first class smoking room, sitting in an armchair and reading a book.

Stead actually predicted the Titanic catastrophe when he wrote the article *How the Mail Steamer Went Down in Mid-Atlantic, by a survivor*, in which a steamer collides with another ship and many people die because of a lack of lifeboats. In 1892 he also wrote a story titled *From the Old World to the New*, which tells about a vessel called the Majestic, that rescues survivors from another ship that collided with an iceberg. These two publications, his deep and serious interest in spiritualism and his unusual death together with the fact that he almost predicted the Titanic catastrophe, made Stead more famous than all of his serious input into the development of British journalism as well as his books and publications, which were famous in Stead's time but forgotten by subsequent generations. But apart from being a sensationalistic journalist and a spiritualist, Stead was also a good historian, careful observer and clever analyst providing in his publications a detailed picture of the political, social and cultural phenomena of the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. As the famous British historian and politician Reginald, 2nd Viscount Esher was to write some years later, "No events since 1880 have not been influenced by WT Stead."⁷ Stead traveled a lot, met the most important people of his times and had a chance to see things not only as an observer but also as a participant or very often a creator of events.

The Americanization of the World seems to be the most valuable among Stead's books, and is probably the most frequently quoted in academic publications. It is most interesting to us in the context of this volume, which poses the question of the place of the United States in the contemporary world. It seems worth going back to the very beginning of the 20th century to look at the attitudes and opinions about the place of the United States in the life of the entire globe. Stead's opinion is one of many voices of optimists perceiving the United States as a hope for the future and not as a threat.⁸

⁶ Richard M. Gamble. 2009. *The Americanization of the World: William T. Stead's Vision of Empire*, available at: www.msu.edu/~mageemal/.../war%20for%20righteousness.doc. Accessed 29.07.2009.

⁷ Victor Pierce Jones, op.cit., 35.

⁸ In Europe, the pessimist approach was more popular, characterised by looking down on the new state, its culture, system and values, which precluded the existence of any positive aspects of the United States' operation in the political, social, and principally in the cultural domain. The nineteenth-century intellectual elites of Europe were principally endangered by the consequences of democratisation of the political, social and cultural life in America, with intensively developing capitalism and modernism. Such anxiety was expressed by very eminent and influential writers such as Mathew Arnold, Max Weber, Maxim Gorky and Johan Huizinga. More information can be found in: Robert W. Rydell and Rob Kroes.

What was to be the future of the 20th-century world according to this smart, talented, and undoubtedly a bit obsessed Englishman? What was the place of the United States of America in the future world?

First of all we have to start from Stead's dream vision in which he wanted to see the globe united in peaceful coexistence of all nations and states. Just after Stead became the editor of *The Northern Echo*, in the context of the unification of Germany that took place the same year Stead came up with an idea of union between the British Empire and the United States of America. The unification of Germany frightened him, and the British-American union was to be a kind of counterpoise to German serving power, to defend what Stead "named a 'true imperialism' aimed at peace, security, unity and humanitarian uplift of the world."⁹

The idea was developed in *The Americanization of the World*, but it has to be mentioned that the idea of unification of different nations in order to maintain peace and security was promoted by Stead not only in relation to the States and Britain. He also advocated the idea of a Slavic Union, in which Russia was to be the leader. This idea came to his mind after visiting Tsar Alexander III in 1888 and continued with Nicholas II. Russia was to be the guarantor of European peace endangered by a unified Germany, and the captain of Slavic world. In 1899 Stead introduced the idea of a federation of European countries – that year he published *The United States of Europe*¹⁰ in which he introduced his vision of a unified Europe. Again, the inspiration for this concept came from Germany, visited by Stead in 1897:

Germany has become the unit, and the Reichstag, although sorely distracted by the fissiparous tendency of the German parliamentary man, has been the parliament of the United Empire. How long will it be, I wondered, as I wandered through the building of the Reichstag, before unified Europe has its Parliament House, and the federation of Europe finds for itself a headquarters and local habitation for a permanent representative assembly? What Germany has done, Europe may do.¹¹

In both cases the main reason why the nations should form federation unions was peace, which, according to Stead, would be better to maintain within the united organisms:

The Union of Germany has not resulted in the disarmament of Germans, neither would the Constitution of the United States of Europe lead to the disarmament of the Continent. But no German now buckles on the sword with any dread lest he may have to unsheathe it against a brother German. The area within which peace reigns and the law court is supreme is now widened so as to include all German lands between Germany and France. That is an enormous gain. If we could achieve anything like it for Europe we might be well content.¹²

2005. *Buffalo Bill in Bologna, The Americanization of the World, 1869–1922*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 142–169.

⁹ Richard M. Gamble, op.cit., 3.

¹⁰ William T. Stead. 1899. *The United States of Europe*. Doubleday & McClure Co.

¹¹ William T. Stead. 1899. *Europa*, excerpted from *The United States of Europe*. Doubleday & McClure Co., available at: <http://www.attackingthediabol.co.uk/steadworks/europa.php>. Accessed 22.07.2009.

¹² Ibidem.

In relation to the unified Europe and unified Slavic nations, Great Britain and, above all, the United States of America were to be the leaders of this modern 'combined' world. In that sense *The Americanization of the World* is on the one hand a proposition of a union of the Anglo-Saxon race, but on the other it provides a vision of the world in which Anglo-Saxons are the 20th-century world's driving force and guarantors of world peace. Stead shared his vision with his close friend, politician and mining magnate Cecil Rhodes, and the famous American millionaire Andrew Carnegie, whom he also knew very well. They all saw the 20th century dominated by the Anglo-Saxon race that was led by youthful and energetic Americans. Richard Gamble claims that Stead took this concept, based on the ideology of a race's superiority, from Charles Darwin. "Indeed, Darwin himself had claimed in the *Descent Man* (1871) that the 'wonderful progress of the United States, as well as the character of the people, are the results of natural selection' – a tendency accelerated by the self-selection of 'energetic, restless, and courageous' immigrants.(...) Stead operated within a similar mental paradigm."¹³

Stead admitted that multi-national American society had originated in Europe, and according to him most immigrants that flooded the USA in the last fifty years were "recruited from the most energetic, enterprising and adventurous members of the Old World."¹⁴ Although Stead underlined the importance of the United Kingdom in contributing to building American society, he appreciated the new values that had emerged from citizens of the Old World in their new reality. "The greatest thing which the Americans have done (...) was the smelting of men of all nationalities into one dominant American type, or – to vary the metaphor – weaving all these diverse threads of foreign material into one uniform texture of American civilization."¹⁵ The American type was a special, abstract creature built of culturally diverse but the most valuable elements of cultures forming the American nation, and that is what predestinates him to be the leader in the 20th century. Moreover, since, as Stead claimed, (...) "the creation of the Americans is the greatest achievement of our race, there is no reason to resent the part the Americans are playing in fashioning the world in their image, which, after all, is substantially the image of ourselves."¹⁶

It has already been mentioned that Stead's vision of the USA as the world's leader and an active peacemaker was born much earlier, but it is in the *The Americanization of the World* where he noticed that the successful leadership of the United States would be in fact a triumph of Great Britain and British culture as, according to Stead, "it may fairly be contended that in the Americanizing of the English – speaking world it is the spirit of Old England reincarnate in the body of Uncle Sam."¹⁷ America gave a second life to the British Empire, the values and culture of which were in decline. With this conception Stead tried to provide a sensible solution to two problems: one was the more and more intensive presence of America in England – American institutions,

¹³ Richard M. Gamble, op.cit., 3–4.

¹⁴ William T. Stead, *The Americanization of the World*, 145.

¹⁵ Ibidem, 149.

¹⁶ Ibidem, 2.

¹⁷ Ibidem, 26.

companies and products, none of which was accepted by British society, especially British elites – and the second was providing a way of saving the fading greatness of the English Empire.

In 19th-century England the intensive presence of American culture and American business was becoming a serious problem. As a matter of fact, Americanization, called by Stead the ‘trend of the twentieth century’ was at that time in full bloom in Britain. To prove his own observation, Stead quoted from Fred Mackenzie’s *The American Invaders: Their Plans, Tactics and Progress*, a book published in 1901, consisting of articles which originally appeared in *The Daily Mail*. He quoted a passage that gave a very suggestive picture of the role American culture and American products played in the everyday life of an average Englishman.

In the domestic life we have got this: the average man rises in the morning from his New England sheets, he shaves with ‘Williams’ soap and a Yankee safety razor, pulls on his Boston boots over his socks from New Carolina, fastens his Connecticut braces, slips his Waltham or Waterbury watch in his pocket, and sits down to breakfast. There he congratulates his wife on the way her Illinois straightfront corset sets off her Massachusetts blouse, and he tackles his breakfast, where he eats bread made from prairie flour (...), tinned oysters from Baltimore and a little Kansas city bacon (...). The children are given ‘Quaker’ oats. At the same time he reads his morning paper, with American ink, and possibly, edited by a smart journalist from New York city.

He rushes out, catches the electric tram (New York) to Shepherd’s Bush, where he gets in a Yankee elevator to take him on to the American-fitted electric railway to the city.

At the office, of course everything is American. He sits on a Nebraskan swivel chair, before a Michigan roll-up desk, writes his letters on a Syracuse typewriter, signing them with a New York fountain pen, and drying them with a blotting-sheet from New England.¹⁸

One can feel disapproval and a sarcastic tone in Mackenzie’s words. Mackenzie expressed, on the one hand fears and concerns, and, on the other, the disdain of thousands of English people who observed the increasing presence of America in their everyday life. They were afraid of American products and criticized them, but could not resist buying and consuming them. Why? Because America meant modernity, comfort and mass availability. American products made life easier and nicer, and because they were produced on a large scale they were cheap and affordable.

Despite his fellow journalists’ and writers’ criticism of American influences, Stead not only admired the United States but also explicitly expressed certainty that the American trend was an unavoidable necessity not only for England but for the entire world. For England, however, the “race unity” with American Anglo-Saxons appeared to him as the only way to avoid “ultimate reduction to the status of an English-speaking Belgium.”¹⁹ On the one hand, “the United States of America have now arrived at such a pitch of power and prosperity as to have a right to claim a leading place among the English-speaking nations cannot be disputed (...),”²⁰ and the other “the Briton (...) should cheerfully acquiesce in the decree of Destiny, and stand in betimes with the

¹⁸ Ibidem, 354–356.

¹⁹ Quoted in Robert W. Rydell, Rob Kroes, op.cit., 97.

²⁰ William T. Stead, *Americanization of the World*, 4.

conquering American. The philosophy of common sense teaches us that seeing we can never be the first, standing alone, we should lose no time in uniting our fortunes with those who have passed us in the race."²¹

What made America winner in this race? What are the sources of American success? Stead actually listed three "secrets of American success." The first, very important one was education. Stead quoted from Richard Cobden, a famous British politician and economist who visited the United States twice during his lifetime and was impressed by several aspects of American reality. In the education of the American common people he saw the secret of their growth. "The universality of education in the United States is probably more calculated than all others to accelerate their progress towards a superior rank of civilization and power (...). If knowledge be power and if education gives knowledge, then the Americans must inevitably become the most powerful people in the world. The very genius of American legislation is opposed to ignorance in the people, as the most deadly enemy of good government."²²

Stead also considered free and universal education as a huge achievement of the American Republic. He admired the democratic access to education, and the fact that almost everyone could at least read and write. He approved of the fact that education was open to women. Stead was a great supporter and propagator of women's emancipation and for that reason he admired the Americans for developing this sector of education. However, what Stead considered the most valuable was the conviction of everybody in America that education was of fundamental value for them: "In America everybody, from the richest to the poorest, considers that education is a boon, a necessity of life, and the more education they get the better it is for the whole country."²³

Stead strongly disagreed with the opinion popular among British educated elites that education was unnecessary for the laboring classes. "It is this which differentiates the Briton from the American. Our men of light and leading, those who have enjoyed all the advantages of superior education, who monopolize the immense endowments of the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge, resent the demand that the children of the agricultural laborer or the costermonger should receive the best education that the State can give them."²⁴ In times when education was very often considered a luxury assigned to elites, Stead perceived it as a necessary power of development and modernity. According to him, the common and compulsory education of every citizen in the country was a necessity of the times.

Another factor of American success which should be appropriated by the rest of the world is that of improved methods of production. Stead recommended the American way of using machinery as more appropriate in times of quick changes and inventions. "The difficulty about machinery arises largely from the English prejudice in favor of good, solid machines, which if once built, will last for a long time. The American deliberately puts in flimsy machinery which will wear out, as he calculates that by the time

²¹ *Ibidem*, 5–6.

²² *Ibidem*, 384.

²³ *Ibidem*, 387.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

he has got all the work out of his machine that it will stand, new improvements will have been invented which will necessitate in any case the purchase of new machinery.”²⁵ American technological advancement was what should be admired and emulated, as it was one of the most important factors in America’s progress.

Finally the third cause of American success that should be copied and implemented in other countries were the principles of democracy. Democracy was seen as the source of American success by many before Stead. One of the most well-known remarks based upon observations of the American system had been written by De Tocqueville over sixty years before Stead’s *The Americanization of the World*. In his publication, Stead presented De Tocqueville’s arguments of the “influence of democratic institutions upon the inventive ingenuity and energy of a people.”²⁶ He argued that other countries should follow the American example and democratize institutions in order “to make every man feel the stimulus of equality of responsibility, equality of opportunity.”²⁷ Stead perceived democracy as a modernizing and upgrading power, whereas the old system appeared to him as a cause of stagnation. “Aristocratic institutions, no doubt, have their advantages, but they do not tend to develop in the mass of people a keen sense of citizenship. They effectively paralyze that consciousness of individual power which gives so great and constant a stimulus to the energy and self-respect of the citizens of the Republic.”²⁸

In this context it seems that for Stead the energy that resulted from the American democratic system was not a main goal of implementing the American system worldwide. “Like so many of his time, Stead was drawn to quantity and mass and energy. But more than power was at stake. The highest goals were world peace, world liberty, ‘free democracy’ and humanitarian uplift. America’s war with Spain had proven the nation’s capacity as a humanitarian and ‘liberating Power.’ Stead predicted (and clearly desired) America’s eventual annexation of Canada and Newfoundland.”²⁹

The triumph of American democracy meant popularization of its rules all over the world, and not only within the American-Anglo-Saxon Union. Stead was absolutely certain about the superiority of American cultural values, and anticipated their dominance even in Asia and the Ottoman Empire. He scrupulously traced signs of American influences worldwide, as if he searched for harbingers of his vision’s fulfillment. At the beginning of the 20th century there were enough “vehicles” of Americanization. While answering the question “How America Americanizes,”³⁰ Stead introduced several ‘vehicles’ of American culture. The first he mentioned was religion. Stead perceived two aspects of Americanization through the power of religion. One was the great object lesson the Americans supply to the rest of the world “as to the possibility of the maintenance of religion without the intervention of state churches and without the penal enactments of intolerant legislature.”³¹

²⁵ Ibidem, 389.

²⁶ Ibidem, 394.

²⁷ Ibidem.

²⁸ Ibidem, 395.

²⁹ Richard M. Gamble, op.cit., 5.

³⁰ William T. Stead, *The Americanization of the World*, 255.

³¹ Ibidem, 262.

In other words, the relation between the American State and free church(es), separate from the state, was according to Stead a new model that should be followed by other, especially European, countries, "with the old tradition that there could be no religion unless the State establishes and endowed some form of religious creed (...)." ³² The second "vehicle" of Americanizing the world through religion were religious movements, all of American origin: Revivalism, Spiritualism and Christian Endeavor, all of which are affecting the religious life of millions. ³³

American literature and journalism were also perceived as powerful tools of Americanization. Stead observed changes in American literature, especially changes that led to creating specific, exclusively American features of literary texts. Although not long ago American literature had been only reflection of English literature, now with names such as Emerson, James Russell Lowell, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Harriet Beecher Stowe, James F. Cooper, Edgar Allan Poe and Walt Whitman, American literature was not only building an American identity, but also spreading a new vision, patterns of writing and literary styles all over the world.

As a journalist Stead was fascinated with American journalism, and considered it as a "more distinctive product than American literature." ³⁴ He noticed that the American newspaper became popular long before the English newspaper, and almost from its very beginning represented the aspirations, the ideas and the prejudices of the masses, and had become "the mirror of the life of American people." ³⁵ Popular press was first born in America and then was adopted by European countries. The new form of American journalism, the one that according to William Randolph Hearst "does things, not only chronicles them," particularly fascinated Stead. He saw its powers in controlling authorities, and in introducing social and customary changes. Stead himself introduced new journalism in Great Britain, and all his spectacular press campaigns were in fact an application of American journalism's rules.

Language became the next Americanizing factor, especially in England where the Queen's English became influenced by American English and started to change. Different vocabulary, pronunciation and simplified spelling, made American English different "from that of the Mother Country," and according to Stead much better. In unification of the language forms, and in eliminating superfluous letters, Stead saw the future of the English language as a universal language. The American modifications became an important step forward in popularizing English worldwide.

At the beginning of the 20th century American art, science and music also gained global popularity. American painters, sculptors and architects very often traveled to the Old World to work for rich Europeans, and in this way influenced European arts.

In the context of the American influence on European culture and society, Stead perceived Americans as "a great internationalizing element. Being themselves an amalgam of many nations, they constitute a kind of human flux, which enables the diverse ele-

³² Ibidem.

³³ Ibidem, 268–275.

³⁴ Ibidem, 290.

³⁵ Ibidem.

ments of hostile nationalities to form a harmonious whole.”³⁶ The observation provided a short but very convincing description of globalization processes in which Americans and American culture played a crucial role at the beginning of the 20th century.

Another Americanizing factor listed by Stead was American science which, he predicted, would shortly dominate world science. The reason for this lay not only in the genius of the people but also in the financial support for scientific research by American millionaires who not only helped “to equip American universities with magnificent apparatus and adequate endowments, but they send their ablest students abroad to study with the best experts in every branch of science.”³⁷ As a matter of fact, Stead perceived American philanthropy as another factor of Americanization. He admired the generosity of American millionaires and regarded it as a source of progress.

Stead also admired Americans for opening science to both sexes, whereas in England, as he claimed, with very few exceptions, science was the monopoly of the male. Stead's reflections about the role of women in 20th-century society presented the very progressive views of their author. Stead wanted to see women as equal members of society, as partners for men, and he believed in their ability to handle social roles reserved so far for men.

American women were also seen as ‘vehicles’ of Americanization, especially the young, rich heiresses of huge American fortunes who married European diplomats and aristocrats and in this way brought financial support in exchange for nobility. Money played an important role in the marriages. “Old castles are repaired and upholstered with the aid of American dollars. Mortgages are paid off, and great estates restored to the possession of their nominal owners. The plutocracy of the New World, reinforcing the aristocracy of the Old.”³⁸ However, American wives brought not only money, but also customs, style of life, fashion, and language, and in this way introduced “an American strain into the Old World.”³⁹

Nevertheless, the aforementioned vehicles of Americanization were nothing in comparison with the power of American business to americanize the world. In relation to the intensity of the commercial activities in Europe, Stead called the Americans – “Invaders,” but in fact looked forward to even more intensive presence of American business activities. He interpreted American business action in categories of novelty, innovativeness and modernity, and perceived it as a powerful wave that was covering with incredible speed and intensity the whole world. Despite the protests of the old order defenders, nothing could turn back the course of future events. The American “invasion” was unavoidable and necessary, because it brought ‘new blood’ into the old, conservative and fossilized European ‘body.’ Europe might not like it or accept it, but it was a process that could not be restrained.

William Thomas Stead predicted the Americanization of the world over a century ago. When we look now at over 100 years of the world's history, we know that Stead's

³⁶ Ibidem, 307.

³⁷ Ibidem, 310–311.

³⁸ Ibidem, 322.

³⁹ Ibidem, 328.

prediction could not be more accurate. However, we must realize that his vision, although very eloquent and upheld by many of Stead's contemporaries, was perceived as the dream of a fanatical journalist whom many did not take seriously, mostly because of his controversial journalistic activity and deep interest in spiritualism.

Over a hundred years later Stead's readers know that this dream, although not as beautiful and unambiguous as Stead saw it, has come true. "American culture continues to dissolve and revolutionize every other culture, and the U.S. now finds itself if not with its flag unfurled over Istanbul then certainly at war with Islamic terrorism. The world has been Americanized to a remarkable degree, and some speak of the nation's mission to universalize the Declaration of Independence and Constitution as birthrights given by God to all people. Some have even claimed that these efforts, especially the war in Iraq, are essential to America's spiritual health."⁴⁰

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⁴⁰ Richard M. Gamble, *op.cit.*, 9.